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# THE JEWS IN POLAND.

I have studied the Jewish question in Poland at close range especially when I visited that Country in 1915. I claim, therefore, that I can discuss that subject with some, degree of authority. Although, I have had the material prepared for sometime, I had no desire to rush into print, but the systematic and virulent attacks upon the Poles by Jews, which spin poisoned webs of slander and lies, do not allow me to keep silent any longer. Whence comes this poison? What are the motives? I will let the reader draw his own answers.

According to Dr. Natan Birnbaum in an article entitled "The Rights of the Eastern Jew". (Den Ostjuden ihr Rechte) which appeared in the Judische Zeitung of Vienna, August 27, 1915, the Jews in Poland want not only their own schools but their own courts of law and their own parliament; they want their Yiddish jargon, which is mutilated imitation of the German language, and their Jewish courts to have the same legal standing as the language and the Courts of Poland. They want to have a State within a State for themselves. Such a program has been strongly supported by the press of Germany and particularly by the semi-official organs of the German government, the "Vossische Zeitung" of Berlin and the "Frankfurter Zeitung". On the 3-rd day of September, 1915, there appeared in the "Frankfurter Zeitung" a lengthy discourse by Nachum Goldman entitled "The Polish-Jewish Problem", of which the following excerpts are literal translations.

"As to the attitude of the Jews within the confines of Poland, especially from the German stand-

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point, it is important to be considered, that the Polish Jews have primarily emigrated from Germany. And right from the very start they assumed the stand as **citizens** and **propagators** of **German Kultur**. The Jewish emigrants brought with them the Jewish German tongue. This tongue is really middle high German (mittelhochdeutsch) which was used in Germany about the 15th century.

"With the Jewish emigration to Poland there begins in Poland a new economic epoch; there was built a new strong middle class which gave a start to the development of commerce and industry in a Country which was purely agricultural. And from that time **Polish Jews together with the Germans residing in Poland** became the greatest initiators and propagators of economic development of the Country. This development was always in close contact with Germany."

The author ascribes this great economic-political importance of the Polish Jews to their exclusiveness in their inward life. "Polish Jews form a separate exclusive caste from the Poles, not only ethnographic and religious but **national and cultural**. This caste leads a strongly developed spiritual and cultural life. Above all the Yiddish language of the masses of the Jewish people in Poland is the foundation of an all around and highly developed literature. This literature has on the **back ground of the German Kultur its very strong orientation**, very much stronger than Polish literature. And if the fate of Poland is now to be settled, and she is to be freed from Russian influences, and be pulled into the circle of Middle European Kultur, above all German Kultur, then Germany will really find in the German Jewish Kultur of Polish Jews an asset which will render her the greatest service in the realization of Germany's aims."

This Jewish author observes that the discussion



of the Polish-Jewish problem is necessary "because it is of great importance and of educational value as it concerns the **safeguarding of German interests.**" He also observes that the antisemitic movement in Poland had its beginning with the third Russian Duma and as a reason he adduces "the desire of the Poles for the complete Polonization of Poland economically and culturally" — There certainly can be no crime in that.—He also says that the boycott would have ruined all the Jews in Poland if War had not broken out, and he accuses the Poles of having given information against the Jews as being spies and traitors, and he quotes as his authority articles from the German press. That there were many spies and traitors who were Jews is a fact.

"The first year of war (1914-1915)" continues Mr. Birnbaum "was for the Jews in Poland a martyrdom which reminds one of the worst times of mediaeval persecutions. **With the entry of the German army into Poland the Polish Jews welcomed them (the Germans) as their deliverers.** It can not yet be said how the new future of Poland will be formed, but the Polish-Jewish question must be attended to at the very beginning of the discussion of the Polish problem. Putting aside all considerations of humanity and justice the safeguarding of the the rights of the Jews is **the postulate of German interests.** Everything points to this, that at the settlement of the Polish question it is essential to safeguard the rights of the Jews, to guarantee the free economic cultural and national development of the Polish Jews.

"In this way the Germans will not only derive benefit for themselves and will find in 21½ millions of Polish Jews a grateful and eternal guard on the frontier against Russia, but they will also accomplish a great human and moral deed. This will be for all time the strongest retort to the phrase-

ology of the entente if Germany in acquiring Poland brings freedom to a nation which has suffered for ages more than any other nation and, therefore, more than any other nation has a right to be freed: the Polish Jews."

This is a sample of a very moderate elaboration on the Jewish question in Poland with which the Jewish and German press has been replete from the beginning of the war; and the poisonous propaganda has spread to other countries especially the United States. I could quote many other more virulent writers like Herman Bernstein of New York but I think this will suffice to convince any unprejudiced mind that this anti-Polish propaganda comes from sources that are dark and of evil purpose.

The Jews expected that "Germany acquiring the possession of Poland will bring deliverance to that nation (Polish Jews) which for centuries has suffered more than any other nation and therefore, has more right than any other nation to such deliverance".

We all know that the Poles in Russian and in German Poland had no government of their own but were themselves oppressed, while in Austrian Poland where the Poles had an autonomous government the Jews enjoyed perfect freedom.

The assertions about Jewish suffering in Poland and from the Poles are downright falsehoods, calculated to mislead those who are not informed and to create prejudice against the Poles.

The accusation that the Poles ever persecuted the Jews, when Poland has always been known for her religious tolerance is too absurd to need refutation. When other European nations continued to persecute and expel the Jews from their Countries, the Polish people during their whole existence as an independent nation received them hospitably and permitted them to dwell in their midst



in peace and contentment. They were even granted special trading privileges and were allowed to organize their own life under their own laws. Religious freedom is the one feature in the social and economic life of Poland which is of outstanding importance in history and of which the Poles feel justly proud.

To show the Polish-Jewish relation in the true light, it will suffice to quote Mr. Herman Feldstein, a Polish Jew, who cannot be suspected of being antagonistic to the Jews.

Mr. Feldstein in his brochure entitled "Poles and the Jews" (Polen und Juden) refutes as slanderous "the fiery protest" of the Danish novelist Brandes, who received his information from the Zionists, that Poles arrange persecutions of the Jews and organize "pogroms". Mr. Feldstein decisively points out, that in no part of the former Polish Republic, was there hatred against the Jews, nor persecutions or Jewish pogroms.

Further after commenting at length on the relations between Poles and Jews in the three parts into which Poland was partitioned, he observes that in Prussian Poland owing to the small number of Jews there the Jewish question was non-existent. In Galicia, Austrian Poland, the relation of the Poles towards the Jews is most important and educational, for here the Poles have autonomous government and are masters of the country, and out of a total population of about 8,000,000 the Jews number 878,000, or about 10 percent of the population in the country and about 30 percent in towns.

"Nowhere" writes Mr. Feldstein "are the Jews able to satisfy their ambition, to educate themselves as freely as in the country, where the Poles dominate, in Galicia. In the lower schools, the middle schools and the high schools there are many more Jewish pupils than Polish in proportion to the population." He further states, that in the

faculties of the gymnasiums (Colleges) and high schools there are Jewish teachers and professors (the Polish University at Lemberg elected for the year 1912-'13 a Jew as "rector magnificus"); that a Jew is president of the Bar association in Lemberg; that the two autonomous capitals of the country, Lemberg and Cracow with purely Polish community representation elected Jews as vice-presidents, that numerous cities with mostly Polish Christian population have Jewish mayors, that the Jews who are in the government service are given important positions. A Polish Jew, N. Korngold Zlotnicki is a director of the Polish National Alliance of America, an organization of 130,000 members of whom only 30 are Jews, the others being Christians. (Would a Jewish organization elect a Christian as one of its directors?) And yet there are Jews who are trying by false reports to make people believe that the Poles in Poland are persecuting the Jews because of their religion and race.

Under date of December 29, 1918, there came a cablegram from Ignace J. Paderewski, the Prime Minister of Poland, which throws further light on the conditions in Poland, especially Galicia, and brands as false the recent newspaper reports.

"There is at the present time a violent anti-Polish agitation rampant which makes the task of political reconstruction more difficult than ever. The disturbances in Lemberg and elsewhere in eastern Galicia were not in the nature of pogroms at all and had nothing to do with so-called anti-Semitic feeling in Poland. These disorders were really due to the wholesale release of criminals from the jails, and as a result sixty of the malefactors were immediately shot by Polish troops.

"Owing to these pernicious reports now being spread broadcast, it is therefore of the highest importance that the commission for which I ap-



plied to the state department should be sent out forthwith to investigate matters and to establish the facts officially. Otherwise this distorted German propaganda is liable to cause us infinite harm."

In Russian Poland, where the Jews numbered in 1913 1,967,000, or 15% of the population (Mr. Nachum Goldmann's assertion in the "Frankfurter Zeitung" as to 2½ million population is incorrect), the Jewish question, according to Mr. Feldstein's assertion, never was a religious or race question, but rather a national and economic difficulty for which the Jews themselves are to blame.

Dr. B. Lapowski, an eminent Polish Jew, who is familiar with the past and present conditions in Poland, gives a correct explanation of the causes which have led to the present difficulties in these words:

"The national existence of the Polish people was at stake, endangered by the sinister activities of the Russian Jews, who, being persecuted in, and driven from Russia, found again a refuge in Poland. From all parts of Russia they flocked into Warsaw and Lodz and other Polish cities, bringing with them the Russian language, Russian customs and ideas. In the streets, restaurants, hotels and theatres, even in the daily business transactions, the Russian language became more prevalent — a thing never heard of in Poland — and the two largest cities of Poland, Warsaw and Lodz, seemed to a stranger like Russian cities. Nearly all the exporting and importing business passed into the hands of the Russian Jews, and they made themselves obnoxious in every walk of life, studiously insulting the traditions and memories which are sacred to the Polish nation. They were playing in Poland the game of the Russification, helping the Russian government in its aims

to Russianize Poland. Far more dangerous for the national existence of Poland was the influence of the Russian Jew upon the native Polish Jew. It hindered the gradual assimilation of the Polish Jews, which, at its best, was progressing very slowly, as the Russian government was studiously interfering with every step undertaken by the Poles to bring the two peoples in closer contact, not allowing teaching to Jews the Polish language in the schools or publishing appropriate books. Up to 1903 even the publication of a Polish-Jewish dictionary was prohibited by the Russian Government.

"With the advent of the Russian Jews, a feeling of separation between the masses of the Polish Jews and the Poles was noticed, and a movement originated among the Jews which was laden with great danger for the national integrity of the Poles. Many Zionistic organizations came into life, a number of Yiddish newspapers were published, all propagating ill-feeling towards the Poles and arousing the dormant Jewish nationalism upon Polish soil. Being surrounded and governed by Russians and Germans, such a movement threatened the Polish nation with disintegration.

"The climax came when, during an election to the Russian Duma, the Russian Jews forced their candidate, an illiterate iron workman, to be elected as representative of the first city in Poland, Warsaw, saying literally to the Poles that "they, and not the Poles, are masters in Warsaw, and that the country is not Poland, but Judaeo-Poland.

"The imminent danger to their nationality was presented vividly to the Poles. It was not enough to be partitioned and governed by the Russians, Austrians, and Prussians, but to see the national life disintegrated by intruders—the Russian Jews



—was more than could be tolerated, and the Poles resolved to stop the influx and the activities of the undesirable and dangerous element. Realizing that the Russian government is only overanxious for its own political ends to undermine the national existence of the Poles by closing its own doors to the Jews and forcing them into Poland as the only place of refuge, and being themselves powerless to stop or influence the conduct of Russia, the Poles organized for self-protection and to strengthen their economic standing a comprehensive system of cooperative commercial and industrial institutions which naturally affected the small traders the majority of whom were Jews."

In German Poland we find that the Jewish problem is being stressed and aggravated as a part of German propaganda in the hope that by means of internal dissention and external misunderstanding Poland may be kept disturbed and impotent, and easily dominated by German influences. In Austrian Poland (Galicia) the condition of the Jews has been as secure and untrammelled as that of the Poles themselves, and the recent stories of pogroms have been proved false. In Russian Poland the difficulties which have arisen have come not from conflict between Poles and Polish Jews, but between the Poles and the Russian Jews, foreigners who were actually seeking commercial and political conquest of Polish territory.

There never has been in Poland any racial or religious persecution of the Jews, and there is none now; and those who are spreading this falsehood know it. But there are economic and national difficulties which have engendered a feeling of bitterness between certain Polish and Jewish circles, a feeling heightened by the fact that many Jews have hoarded food supplies and have been profiteering at the expense of the starving population. Furthermore, the Jews have been very

active in sowing the seed of Bolshevism and anarchy in Poland.

In Kielce a crowd of about 300 Jewish youths made a street demonstration during which they shouted "Long live Lenine"! "Long live Trotsky!" "Down with Poland!" The angered population attacked them and a bloody skirmish ensued, during which about 40 of the Jewish participants in the demonstration were killed. They met this fate not because they were Jews, but because they were Bolsheviki who offended the national sentiment of the Poles. What people would tolerate such pernicious activities?

During the march of the Polish troops through the town Uscilug, a party of some 500 Jews armed with rifles, furnished by Germany probably, opened fire upon the Poles. The soldiers replied in kind, killed 14 and wounded 47 of the assailants.

Mr. Paderewski the Polish Premier stated as reported by the Associated Press, June 1-st, that when the Polish Army captured the city of Wilna and with it the general staff of the Bolshevik army operating in that territory, almost all of them were Jews. Some of them were tried and convicted of unspeakable barbarities.

These occurrences surely do not come under the definition of pogroms of defenseless Jews.

In many localities of Poland, Hungary and Bohemia, bands of soldiers of the disorganized Austro-Hungarian army committed acts of violence whose victims were Jews. The guilt for these acts must not be ascribed to the Polish people.

During the brief period during which the city of Lemberg was in the hands of the so called Ukrainian army, consisting mostly of German and Austrian soldiers, prisons were opened and the inmates were released. At the time of the redemption of the city by the Poles these bandits were pillaging Jews and Christians alike. Upon occupy-



ing the city, the Polish command placed these bandits under courtmartial with the result that 60 were executed and about 1000 were sentenced to terms in prison. Of the total number of those convicted, 60 percent were Ruthenians, 30 percent Poles, and 10 percent were Jews. In this case neither can there be sustained the charge of a Jewish pogrom organized by the Polish population. Right here, it might be well to consider just what is meant by "pogrom". Pogroms are nothing short of systematic persecutions, generally taking the form of massacres on a more or less extended scale, according to the circumstances. Thus the Cossacks used to launch pogroms against the Jews under instigation of the old Russian regime, and they would ride through Jewish settlements killing right and left, including in the list of their victims women as well as men, children as well as adults. There was no discrimination by those bloodthirsty barbarians. Who will dare stand up and deliberately accuse a nation of civilized, cultured people like the Poles of carrying out pogroms, when the real meaning of the word is intelligently comprehended. He who would risk such a charge is guilty of infamous calumny. The Poles have harbored Jews exiled from Russia. These same Poles once saved Christianity when Polish soldiers repulsed the Turks before Vienna.

In the St. Louis (Mo.) Globe Democrat of May 26th and other papers, there appeared a half-page advertisement inserted by Jews to support their accusations of persecution of the Jews in Poland by the Poles. Some 130 places were mentioned as scenes of alleged "atrocities", and the dates given run from November 1, 1918, to January 1919, that is during the period just preceeding and succeeding the signing of the armistice; — in other words, a period in eastern Europe where lawlessness was almost supreme; a period when the Polish Republic as now constituted

DID NOT EXIST. It was during a time when prisoners of war from Russia were returning to Austria and Germany; when bandits, cutthroats and jailbirds of all kinds were roaming at large; when there was little or no order, and hardly any attempt at maintaining the same; and yet, during such a period, there occurred, according to the Jews' own advertisement, only 115 deaths in 130 places. And be it remembered, the Jews do not state that even these 115 cases were deaths of Jews caused by Poles. They dare not make such a charge. They are simply cases of deaths owing to violence by someone or other. And, furthermore, it does not appear what took place when these Jews were killed. Were they apprehended, perhaps, in the act of plundering? Were they, perchance, firing upon soldiers who happened to occupy those places? These facts are not made clear. They deserve careful investigation. At any rate, it is clear that on their own testimony, the Jews have failed to prove (1) that the Poles conducted pogroms; (2) that there were any real pogroms in Poland. The Polish government is absolved from any guilt in the premises.

In the New York Globe of May 24, Dr. Vernon Kellogg, head of the United States Food Administration Commission in Poland, just returned from that country, is quoted as saying that he never during the time he was in Poland, even heard of any pogroms on the part of the Poles against the Jews. There is concrete testimony from a native American, who had no interest in the one side or the other, but who was simply in the country on an errand of mercy, feeding Poles and Jews alike, at a time when these "pogroms" were alleged to have taken place. Dr. Kellogg adds that he did hear about the execution of thirty-odd Jews in Pinsk by the Polish army officials, (which the Polish Government promptly made known declaring that the Jews were apprehended in the act of plotting a-

gainst the Polish army). That is all Dr. Kellogg says he ever knew of in the way of "hostilities". Could a more impartial witness be desired?

**Our American Minister to Poland Mr. Gibson  
has denied that there are pogroms in Poland.**

In certain localities, the starving population attacked store houses, where dishonest speculators hoarded food supplies. These speculators were mostly Jews who demanded exorbitant prices. Bread riots resulted, but no pogroms, nor was the religion of these speculators the cause of the outbreaks. The Jews seem to have the idea that while other nationals may be punished by an indignant populace for spreading Bolshevism, and anarchy, for hoarding food supplies and charging for them unheard-of prices, they because they are Jews, ought to be immune from punishment. Such "pogroms" would under similar circumstances occur in any Country. I fear in America they would fare much worse.

The alleged pogrom in Pinsk about which the Jews have raised such a storm of protests, according to the testimony of Col. Francis J. Fronczak of Buffalo, N. Y. just returned from Poland, where he was connected with the American Red Cross and who was in Pinsk at that time, was no pogrom at all, but a lawful execution by Polish troops of a number of bolsheviki conspirators for plotting to seize, disarm and massacre an outpost of Polish soldiers on the Eastern frontier of Poland. It is true that those conspirators were nearly all Jews, but they were not executed because of that but because they were plotting to kill Polish soldiers.

Dr. B. L. Smykowski of Bridgeport, Conn., Prof. Zowski of Ann Arbor University, Rev. John Iciek, Chaplain of the Polish Army, W. S. Reymont, famous Polish Author, Lieut. Wolski and many



others who recently returned from Poland, all deny that there were pogroms in Poland.

There may be some who will say that the testimony of Poles may be one sided. I will therefore call the reader's attention to the statement of the Honorable Stephen G. Porter, Chairman of the House Committee on Foreign Affairs which is investigating the alleged pogroms.

### **House of Representatives**

**Committee on Foreign Affairs.**

**Tuesday, June 10, 1919.**

The Committee this day met, Honorable Stephen G. Porter, (Chairman) presiding.

#### **After Executive Session.**

"The Chairman: Gentlemen, the Committee has carefully surveyed this situation. It is one of very great delicacy. We feel that we should deprecate any religious wars in this country, and since fixing today for a hearing, we have received information from the State Department that has convinced us of the wisdom of adjourning for a few days until we can get the final report from our officials abroad.

For your information, I will state that some time ago, a committee composed of Minister Gibson, Dr. Bogan and Col. Bailey, was instructed to investigate these alleged outrages in Poland. I do not know whether they were instructed to go into the Roumanian affair or not, but that is immaterial. We have a report this morning from Minister Gibson that shows that these reports are very much exaggerated, and we feel that we should await any action on these resolutions until the committee composed of Minister Gibson, Dr. Bogan and Col. Bailey shall have made its report. The probabilities are that the report will be satisfactory to every body and there will be no neces-

sity for any further action on the part of the committee. In case it is not, then it is our purpose to go into the hearings. We did not have this information, that is, the report of Minister Gibson until this morning. Of course, that has changed the situation very considerably.

The Committee is unanimous in regard to this matter, and we sincerely hope that you will impress upon your people at home the necessity that this agitation should cease. **Thousands and tens of thousands of people have heard stories — well, that are not true.** We trust that you will go back home and say to your people, expecially to your newspapers, to await until we get the report of the representatives of our government in Poland as to the facts, and then they are at perfect liberty to draw whatever conclusions they see fit.

There is another element in the matter that I think you ought to know. According to the evidence before the committee, there was a meeting in New York some four or five weeks ago of a number of prominent Jewish people, and they arranged for a systematic campaign of protest throughout the United States. The plans were apparently well prepared, because, as you all know, meetings have been held in all of the principal cities of the country. It struck me at the time, that it was quite significant that there was no protest over the killing of the Jews in the Bolshevik country, Russia and Hungary. According to my information, I believe it is safe to say that there are 300 and probably 500 Jews killed in Russia to one in Poland. For instance, I noticed in the morning Post on the front page, an article with regard to the killing of several thousand Jews in Russia three or four days ago.

Now, our military authorities report to us that there is a German newspaper in Kowno, (Lithania) that is controlled and owned by Ger-

mans ; that it is sending out many of these reports which appear in the papers in this country. The view over there is that it is certainly not in the interest of Poland or the Jews, but for the purpose of impressing the world with the fact that Poland is not capable of self-government."

The demands of the Jews to have in Poland their own laws and their own courts of law, their own parliament, are absurd. It is inconsistent with the idea of national unity. There are about 21½ millions of Jews in Poland, 11 per cent of the total population. The fact that there are that many Jews in Poland proves that Poland was more hospitable to Jews than other countries. It is impossible that they should rule the country, and equally impossible that there should be a Jewish State within a Polish State. No nation can exist divided against itself.

The Jewish question in Poland is a question for the Poles to decide, and if the Jews will be as loyal citizens in Poland as they are in America, France and England, they need have nothing to fear from the Poles. **They will be treated as they have always been**, on a basis of perfect equality with the other citizens of Poland. They must expect nothing more.

The Premier of Poland Mr. Paderewski said in his proclamation. "In free independent Poland all her citizens are found under the protection of the law and this law is administered in equal measure to all without distinction as to religion or extraction."

